



## **cardinal flower**

*Lobelia cardinalis*

Kingdom: Plantae  
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

### **Features**

Cardinal flower is a perennial herb whose stems may grow to six feet tall. Stems are usually hairy and have milky sap. The lance-shaped, usually toothed leaves are arranged alternately on the stem. They may be six inches long and up to two inches wide. Flowers are bright red, two-lipped, and may be up to two inches long. The upper lip has two lobes, while the lower lip has three. Fruits are spherical capsules that may be one-half inch wide. The tiny, warty seeds are yellow-brown.

### **Natural History**

Cardinal flower grows in marshes, bottomland forests, wet meadows and prairies, and along streams, ponds, and lakes. It flowers from July through September.

### **Habitats**

bottomland forests; Mississippi River; wet prairies and fens; natural lakes and prairie marshes; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds and reservoirs

### **Iowa Status**

common; native

### **Iowa Range**

eastern half of Iowa

### **Bibliography**

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.